

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF AVERY

The Avery County Board of Commissioners met in a Budget Workshop on Thursday, May 1, 2008 at 3:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Board Room, Avery County Administrative Complex, Newland, NC.

Members Present: Kenny Poteat, Chairman; Susan Pittman, Vice-Chair; Phyllis Forbes, Scott Heath, and Dan South

Call to Order

Chairman Poteat called the meeting to order at 3:37 p.m. Prayer was offered by Scott Heath.

FY 2008-2009 Budget

Robert Wiseman, County Manager, stated the purpose of this meeting was not to go into detail on the 2008-2009 Budget but just an overview. The County Manager said Tim Greene, County Finance Officer, had prepared an excellent document which should answer most of the Board's questions and give the Board an in depth look of where the Budget is going. The County Manager stated in February requests for budget proposals were sent out and justification was required for budget requests. He advised that in mid March interviews were done with the 28 departments individually regarding their budgets. The County Manager said there were 24 Special Appropriations besides the 28 departments but not all of them were interviewed. The County Manager advised when the amount of budget proposals they had in hand were added up the total amount of the requests were almost 2.6 million dollars above the projected rates. Capital Outlay Requests were then gone through line item by line item each department and each request and the essentials versus wants were looked at and cuts were made. The County Manager stated that the operational requests were then examined i.e., extra personnel, and also the nonprofits were examined (Hospice, Humane Society, Yellow Mountain) and the nonprofits were given 3% above what they were allocated the previous year for the most part and a decision was made to not fund any new programs. There was a substantial expense for an After School program that was not considered. The County Manager advised after all of this was accomplished the deficit was reduced from 2.6 million dollar to roughly ½ million dollars. Some of the things that are contributing to this is a \$200,000 increase in the worker's compensation and that is up 56% over last year. Phyllis Forbes asked if the \$200,000 was in the budget to which the County Manager stated that it was.

The County Manager stated there was \$210,000 for a water tank, \$104,000 for a rubberized track and also \$375,000 that the Board has committed for the property purchase for the recreation department. The \$375,000 is included in the budget but will be funded out of the Capital Reserve Fund.

Discussion regarding 2008/2009 proposed budget document. Tim Greene stated the budget was out of balance by \$689,332 dollars. Mr. Greene advised there was an amount of revenue that he had not budgeted that was called the Medicaid Hold Harmless Amount but he would rather balance the budget without including this money.

Chairman Poteat stated the Board needed to keep in mind as the budget is discussed for the next month that this is not a banner year and all the politicians are suggesting a Recession. Chairman Poteat stated it was not time to enact new programs and that the Board should be very cautious this year with the expenditures.

The County Manager advised there were employees in the Conservation department driving vehicles with 250,000 miles or more and employees with Senior Services delivering meals that had high mileage on these vehicles but yet nonprofits have been getting very lucrative increases each year.

Discussion regarding the Tax Assessors Office's Software and an upgrade to that system and the Finance Office's Software upgrade.

Dan South entered the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Recess

The Finance Officer stated that at the meeting with Mayland Community College on April 29, 2008 the decision was made to just give a lump sum and let Mayland Community College decide how to divide between operational and capital. Phyllis Forbes advised that she didn't believe that any of the three counties (Avery, Mitchell, Yancey) wanted Mayland Community College to be 58 out of 58 in local funding. The County Manager stated that the agreement between the three counties (Avery, Mitchell, Yancey) states that each county would appropriate an equal amount of money being 33 1/3% for each county; if there is a county that wants to give more or less, the other two counties have to agree with the amount.

Discussion regarding the Sheriff's budget and the patrol cars that were requested. Scott Heath stated he did not feel comfortable with going through the Sheriff's budget and telling the Sheriff the things he can have or not have as the Sheriff is an elected official.

Phyllis Forbes left at 4:56 p.m. for a Library Board Meeting.

Dan South stated that he did not agree with the Sheriff’s budget increase. Mr. South advised that the Board also needed to take a hard look at the Special Appropriations. The County Manager stated that Mitchell County does not fund any nonprofits. Scott Heath advised that the County has primary responsibilities and then secondary responsibilities.

The County Manager commented that included in this budget for 2008-2009 is two additional emergency medical technicians for the Green Valley Substation and a part time person for the Economic Development Commission subject to the Board’s approval.

ADJOURN
Motion by Scott Heath and Second by Susan Pittman to adjourn this meeting at 5:13 p.m.
Motion unanimously approved.

Kenny Poteat, Chairman
Avery County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST: _____
Cindy Turbyfill
Clerk to the Board